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## VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

# Diverse resources come together under VOAD

**I**magine the disaster recovery process as a tree with three main branches growing from its trunk: the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), the State Disaster Recovery Task Force and the State Donations Management Program. All three of these organizations are currently working to create a viable partnership that would eliminate duplication of effort between them and make maximum use of their funds.

"VOAD consists primarily of church-related groups," said Chairman Lloyd Jackson. "Even in the smallest community in Virginia there's probably a church, and if it's one of the mainline denominations, it will probably be a VOAD member."

A range of members form a loose coalition under the VOAD umbrella. Some denominations and organizations represented are the Church of the Brethren, the United Methodists, the Mennonites, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist and Presbyterian Churches, the Jewish Community Federation, United Way, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross. Government members include the Office of Volunteerism, the Department of Social Services, VDES and, during a federally declared disaster, FEMA.

"We are specifically a disaster response organization," said Jackson. "Two things we primarily emphasize are coordination of our response and resources and cooperation and communication among our members. Our overall goal is to assist localities during the immediate emergency and through the recovery stage, whether or not the disaster is declared."

The state VOAD, like the State Disaster Recovery Task Force, provides assistance when needs can't be met locally. "We

encourage local action first," said VOAD Secretary Jim McDonald. "If emergency managers don't know the VOAD people at the local level, we can supply the contacts for them."

Most of the religious denominations represented in VOAD have disaster response plans of their own. Frequently local churches provide such effective response that state VOAD resources are not needed. McDonald cited Northumberland County's experience as a prime example. After a tornado struck one of the county's small, rural communities



last summer, destroying and damaging a number of homes, local churches provided residents with an extensive network of support.

Local VOAD members have helped out in a number of recent disasters. After the 1995 summer flooding in Madison County, the Adventist Community Services managed the influx of donations on the local level and delivered water to stricken communities. To assist with rebuilding, the United Methodists provided \$298,465 for the floods of 1995 and Hurricane Fran. Some of these United Methodist dollars helped residents of Naked Creek in Page County acquire replacement mobile homes when Fran's floodwaters swept away the pre-flood ones.

Volunteers from the Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren are renown for lending their carpentry skills to help rebuild homes and communities. The

Church of the Brethren has provided other services as well, including child care for families cleaning up in the aftermath of a disaster. Congregations have indicated they would assist with livestock and farm care, as well.

"The local churches, through their VOAD representatives at the state level, can provide all kinds of funding and assistance," said Jackson. "The state VOAD can channel financial or manpower resources to localities. We can supply volunteer power for cleanup, debris removal and repair."

While the State Disaster Recovery Task Force and the Donations Management Program — working out of the Department of Housing and Community Development and VDES — use state money, the individual organizations in VOAD manage their own funds. At this point, VOAD, the State Disaster Recovery Task Force and the State Donations Management Program are working to coordinate the use of their funds during a disaster.

In addition, to ensure that VOAD has a visible presence at the local level and is clearly perceived as a resource during recovery, local disaster recovery task forces are encouraged to include a VOAD representative in their membership.

"VOAD doesn't replicate state or federal assistance," said McDonald. "Much of our assistance comes in after the government and other organizations have responded. In terms of recovery issues, we can provide helpful points of contact for the emergency manager."

For a directory of phone numbers and addresses of VOAD member organizations, call Lloyd Jackson at 804/672-2100. For assistance with establishing a local disaster recovery task force, call Selby Jacobs at 804/371-7070.

# Schoolchildren in Petersburg get prepared

**R**eading, writing, arithmetic — and disaster preparedness — are these subjects being taught in your locality's schools this year? In the city of Petersburg's school district, teachers are incorporating an emergency preparedness program into their daily lesson plans. Called "Education for Life," it was developed by Robert Phelps, safety and security director for the Southside Regional Medical Center.

"There is no curriculum that addresses how to survive natural disasters, and I think there should be. That's how strongly I feel about it," said Phelps, who has 20 years' experience with EMS and fire services. "The purpose of this program is to help the students become self-sufficient and survival-ready."

The packet contains a four-part lesson module created by Phelps that includes planning work sheets, suggested curricula and activity calendars to help teachers design a

curriculum that will fit their needs.

Lessons revolve around four concepts: awareness, planning, collecting and exercising. Students are made aware of the disasters that may affect their community, make plans for them, assemble a disaster supplies kit and exercise their plans.

In addition to lesson guides, the program packet contains the "Adventures of the Disaster Dudes" video and presenter's guide, the FEMA "Get Ready" coloring book, NOAA's "Watch Out ... Storms Ahead!" weather book, information about the "Kids' CAER" curriculum, the American Red Cross publications price list, the VDES home page address and other information teachers can use to plan a disaster

preparedness curriculum. "The program encourages parents and children to become a team," said Phelps. "All of the activities are events they can do as a family."

Phelps has also put together a presentation on diskette,

using WordPerfect and Harvard Graphics, that he used to introduce the program at an annual school district staff development day.

The presentation caught the attention of Georgia Kirkpatrick, elementary school guidance counselor. She arranged for the program to be taught to the students in her school. "We have many fires in Petersburg," she commented. "We had the tornado, we've had snowstorms — these are all major, life-threatening disasters we believe our students

should be educated about and prepared for. This program ties in very well with any number of subjects such as health, science or social studies."

What are the benefits of such a program? "There are several that I project for Petersburg," said Phelps. "With increased public awareness, the community will be more supportive of emergency services and, during a disaster, there will be less loss of life. The program can help the emergency manager integrate the community into the emergency management partnership. For any program to be effective, the community must be a participating partner."

If you would like a copy of the presentation on disk, send a formatted disk to: Robert Phelps, Southside Regional Medical Center, 801 South Adams Street, Petersburg, Virginia, 23803. To receive the "Education for Life" program packet, call him at 804/862-5835.



## VEMA Conference coming to Virginia Beach

Sunbathing ... snow cones and cotton candy ... ice-cold beverages — you may not find these at Virginia Beach in March, but you'll discover something even better! From March 5-7, come visit and bask in the enlightening rays of the 1997 Annual VEMA Conference.

Some sneak previews? A panel composed of state and local communications experts will talk about the problems and solutions for communications in your locality. In addition, this nuts and bolts presentation will fill you in on communications coordination at the state level.

Planning for an upcoming special event? Get some great tips from speakers who have 'been there and done that.' Mike Reik and Bill Sammler will discuss their roles as members of FEMA's Federal Response Team during the summer Olympics in Atlanta. They'll describe the planning involved in staging such a huge event, particularly with regard to weather and emergency medical services.

A representative from the FBI will be discussing Presidential Decision Directive 39 which delineates federal, state and local response roles in the event of a terrorist act. He will address how this directive will impact localities. In addition, FBI repre-

sentatives from area offices across the state are attending so that emergency managers can meet them and ask any questions they may have.

"The information that will be presented can be applied at the local level across the Commonwealth," said Chris Eudailey, conference organizer. "I would encourage local emergency services managers to come together and gain valuable insights, share lessons learned and network with their peers in government and private industry."

For more information, call Chris Eudailey at 540/582-7095.

# HAZ MAT



## Virginia Hazmat Officers forge national standards

**V**irginia's hazmat responders have just been handed a bullhorn to make their voices heard across the country. Through the efforts of VDES Hazardous Materials Officers Bobby Clark and Steve Patrick and Fairfax County Hazardous Materials Coordinator Steve Rhea, local responders can help shape the development of nationwide standards for hazardous materials response.

Last October, Clark was officially appointed to the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Technical Committee on Hazardous Materials Response Personnel. The emergency bonding and grounding procedures he helped develop have been approved by the NFPA and will be adopted as a nationwide standard this month. Although adherence to the standards is voluntary, most responders in this country and Canada follow NFPA recommendations.

Clark said, "As a committee member, one of my primary goals at this point is to get feedback from Virginia's hazmat community so that I can voice their concerns at the national level. This is a great opportunity for hazmat responders to offer their opinions and ideas regarding where they think the committee's programs should be headed."

In addition, the NFPA is working with the National Fire Academy and a number of other organizations to develop training and response standards for terrorist incidents. This past October, the National Fire Academy hosted a conference titled, "Emergency Response to Terrorism." They invited Patrick, Rhea and 31 other experts from all over the world to attend. Ireland, Japan and Israel, countries hard-hit by terrorist incidents, were represented.

"At the conference, we identified deficiencies in training, equipment and procedures," said Patrick. "Based on this, the group made two recommendations. First, it plans to develop and distribute a home study course that deals with response to terrorist incidents. Rhea and I will assist with designing the course, which should be completed in three to four months. Second, the committee will develop a 16-hour course on emergency response to a terrorist incident that will be field-deliverable by early summer."

The NFPA hazmat committee is in the process of voting on a set of standards, developed by Patrick and others, that will assist hazmat teams in planning for and responding to terrorist acts.

Call Bobby Clark at 540/745-3001 with your input on the NFPA Hazmat Committee programs. Call Steve Patrick at 703/878-4368 for information about the terrorism conference.

## Digital technology replaces analog system

**O**n New Year's Day, another analog technology became history as the Emergency Broadcasting System was replaced with the digital Emergency Alert System (EAS). The new technology promises to be faster, more efficient and more accurate.

"The EAS is a 'web' system in which the message travels over several paths simultaneously," said Fred Vincent, deputy operations director. "This makes it a much more reliable and redundant system than the EBS, which used a relay system. If the relay broke down at any point during transmission, stations 'downstream' from the break did not receive the message."

The digital EAS offers major improvements for both the public and emergency services. Because the system is computer-friendly, emergency messages can be tailored in a number of different ways, using digital codes. State and local officials will be able to send out emergency information targeted to affected areas. The National Weather Service can provide community-specific severe weather warnings and alerts.

In addition, future enhance-

ments will allow people to program specially equipped televisions, car radios, pagers and similar products to automatically receive only the EAS alerts and warnings that apply to their communities. Broadcast stations, cable systems and other participating services can send and receive emergency information automatically, as opposed to the old system where EOC staff verbally transmitted the messages.

The messages can be text, voice, video or any combination of the three and can be transmitted in a variety of languages. The alert tone, shortened to about eight seconds, will be broadcast only during the monthly tests.

"At this point, the Virginia State EAS plan has not yet been approved by the FCC," said Vincent. "EAS will work like EBS, however, in that the locality will contact the local EAS station and request activation for an emergency situation. EAS activation for local and state emergencies is still voluntary, but is mandatory for national emergencies."

Visit <http://www.fcc.gov/Reports/rpts4004.txt>, for information on the new system.

## NCCEM goes global

Serving the needs of a global constituency is one of the goals in NCCEM's strategic plan. To further this vision, the organization has welcomed to the Board of Directors its first international region, NCCEM Canada.

For a taste of our northern neighbor's commitment to emergency management, visit the Emergency Preparedness Canada home page. You can link to it from the VDES web site or go to <http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/~epc/>

## TRAINING



**The Basic Public Information/Media Relations class scheduled for January 9 in Culpeper has been rescheduled for February 20 in Leesburg.**

**Emergency Preparedness Community Outreach**  
February 7  
Newport News

**EOC Management and Operations**  
February 25-27  
Spotsylvania County

**Coordinators' Briefing**  
March 4-5  
Virginia Beach

**Basic PIO**  
March 13  
Danville  
For information, call the VDES Training Office at 804/674-2458

**Technological Hazards Division Hazardous Materials Technician**  
March 10-21  
Ashland  
For information, call the VDES Tech Haz Division at 804/674-2510

**Search and Rescue National Association for Search and Rescue Conference "Response '97"**  
May 28-31  
Richmond  
For information, call Winnie Pennington at 804/674-2422

**Conferences and Workshops VEMA Annual Conference**  
March 5-7  
Virginia Beach  
For information, call 540/582-7095

## More sites worth seeing

**J**ust when you think you've discovered the largest, most gigantic, most massive and most extensive listing of emergency services-related sites on the Internet, another website is created that steals its thunder. The latest is the Emergency Resource Directory, with thousands of links that span several countries as well as all 50 states. Because it's fairly graphics-intensive, links operate rather slowly, but you can use the page's search engine to streamline your browsing. Go to <http://www.clarknet.com/erd> and check out its A to Z listings.

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Housenet's site contains almost everything you want your citizens to know about recovering from floods and hurricanes. Using information from FEMA and American Red Cross publications, the site contains 31 articles covering everything from drying a home to restoring

## CEM recertification begins

This year marks the beginning of the CEM recertification process. To be recertified, the candidate can either complete a test or submit a "maintenance package." The requirements for the maintenance package are:

- ☐ Demonstration of continued professional education and contributions to the profession;
- ☐ Completion of 100 hours of continuing education, with at least 75 hours in emergency management-related subjects and the remainder in general management courses.

Professional contributions must be demonstrated in six categories: membership in emergency management organizations, committee service, organizational leadership, special assignments not undertaken as part of routine job requirements, speaking engagements, publications, teaching, awards or special recognition, state certification or state or federal legislative contacts.

Beginning in 1998, candidates must pass a test in addition to completing the credentials packet. For information, call 703/538-1795 or e-mail: [nccem@aol.com](mailto:nccem@aol.com)

utilities. Mitigation information and family evacuation planning are offered as well. Share this site with the media outlets in your locality after the next disaster and spread this valuable information speedily through your community. Bookmark this at [http://www.housenet.com/articles/Saf\\_Sec/STORM.HTM](http://www.housenet.com/articles/Saf_Sec/STORM.HTM)

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Taking an active role in disaster awareness, preparedness and recovery, the Fran-

chise Emergency Action Team (FEAT) is a coalition of franchise businesses that have pooled their resources to help communities stricken by disasters. Some of the many valuable efforts of this group include distributing flood recovery information and feeding disaster victims through participating franchise business outlets. Their web site contains a range of information about the organization's efforts. Visit them at <http://www.entremkt.com/feat>



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Access the VDES homepage at:  
<http://www.state.va.us/~des/des.htm>